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JOURNAL
OF THE
STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

MAY, 1838.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Council of the Statistical Society of London is of opinion that the time has arrived when the Fellows of the Society, and the public, will hail with satisfaction the appearance of a Journal devoted to the collection and comparison of Facts which illustrate the condition of mankind, and tend to develop the principles by which the progress of society is determined.

It is within the last few years only that the Science of Statistics has been at all actively pursued in this country; and it may not, even now, be unnecessary to explain to general readers its objects, and to define its province. The word Statistics is of German origin, and is derived from the word *staat*, signifying the same as our English word *state*, or a body of men existing in a social union. Statistics, therefore, may be said, in the words of the Prospectus of this Society, to be the ascertaining and bringing together of those “facts which are calculated to illustrate the condition and prospects of society;” and the object of Statistical Science is to consider the results which they produce, with the view to determine those principles upon which the well-being of society depends.

The Science of Statistics differs from Political Economy, because, although it has the same end in view, it does not discuss causes, nor reason upon probable effects; it seeks only to collect, arrange, and compare, that class of facts which alone can form the basis of correct conclusions with respect to social and political government.

These are the objects to which, in prosecution of the ends of this Society, the Journal will be devoted; and the Council looks forward with confidence to the time when, through the exertions of its own Members and of corresponding Societies throughout the country, the Journal will become an important instrument for developing and

diffusing the knowledge of truth, and for detecting and removing error and prejudice.

No other Society, and no other existing publication, has a more important or interesting end in view. "The noblest study of mankind is man;" and it cannot be contradicted, that the knowledge and proper appreciation of those facts which determine and explain the civilization, riches, power, and happiness of our own and of other nations, is not inferior in usefulness to any other science.

The scope also of Statistics is of a very extensive nature. They are closely allied to the other sciences, and receive contributions from all of them; they are, as it were, the link which connects them with the practical purposes of life.

Thus no statistical account of a country can be perfect without comprehending its Geography—a description of the extent and character of its surface, of the abundance or scarcity of water, the degree of heat or cold, of dryness or humidity, consequent upon its geographical position; with many other conditions of the first elements of existence, which all influence more or less the operations and comforts of men, and the production and consumption of wealth.

Statistics are connected with Geology, by the relation of the latter to the mineral wealth of a country, and to Agriculture. They enter into that part of Zoology which points out the means of sustenance, of industrial employment, and of commerce. The character of uncivilized nations is determined either by their geographical position, or by the nature of the animal kingdom which surrounds them. Their inhabitants become hunters or fishers, as game or fish abound; bold and enterprising when exposed to the attacks of the lion and the bear;—crafty and subtle when dependent for food upon the deer and quail. The possession of the horse leads them to become marauders; and that of cattle makes them herdsmen. The woollen manufacture of this country owes its existence to the possession of a particular breed of sheep, and the silk trade of France owes much of its prosperity to that of the silk-worm and mulberry. The last illustration shews the connection of Statistics with Botany. The cultivation of silk depends upon the existence of the proper food for the sustenance of the worm. Botany, which discovers the properties and uses of the vegetable kingdom, selects the food proper for this purpose; while Horticulture directs the best means of producing it, and of increasing its supply.

It is unnecessary to shew how every subject relating to mankind itself, forms a part of Statistics; such as, population; physiology; religion; instruction; literature; wealth in all its forms, raw material, production, agriculture, manufactures; commerce; finance; government; and, to sum up all, whatever relates to the physical, economical, moral, or intellectual condition of mankind. Mechanics discover the means of

abridging human labour; Chemistry enters largely into the economy of Arts; Medicine practises on the bodies of men; all these sciences operate upon human interests, and their powers and effects are susceptible of statistical exposition. Even Astronomy, by exhibiting the influence of the heavenly bodies upon the seasons, and Meteorology, by explaining the causes and chances of atmospheric changes, are connected with Statistics; since both the seasons and the atmosphere materially affect the employments and the physical condition of men. In fact, as all things on earth were given to man for his use, and all things in creation were so ordained as to contribute to his advantage and comfort, and as whatever affects man individually affects also man in a state of society, it follows that Statistics enter more or less into every branch of Science, and form that part of each which immediately connects it with human interests.

Like other sciences, that of Statistics seeks to deduce from well-established facts certain general principles which interest and affect mankind; it uses the same instruments of comparison, calculation, and deduction: but its peculiarity is that it proceeds wholly by the accumulation and comparison of facts, and does not admit of any kind of speculation; it aims, like other sciences, at truth, and advances, *pari passu*, with its development.

The Statist commonly prefers to employ figures and tabular exhibitions, because facts, particularly when they exist in large numbers, are most briefly and clearly stated in such forms, and because he is not satisfied with giving deductions, which admit of question, but supplies the material which each individual may himself examine and compare. It is not, however, true that the Statist rejects all deductions, or that Statistics consist merely of columns of figures; it is simply required that all conclusions shall be drawn from well-attested data, and shall admit of mathematical demonstration.

The History of Statistics in this country will occupy but a short space. Until within a very few years, England possessed few works of much authority embracing all the various branches of the Science. Among the few valuable labours of this kind may be mentioned Sir John Sinclair's "Statistical Account of Scotland," Sir F. M. Eden's "State of the Poor," and Colquhoun's "Treatise on the Wealth, Power, and Resources of the British Empire." But separate branches of this science had been ably treated by various writers. Indeed it is probable that no other country is so well able to trace in detail the progress of its prosperity during the last century and a half, since the date of the Reformation, as Great Britain.

Towards the close of the seventeenth, and the commencement of the eighteenth century, Reynolds, Child, and Petty, published very valuable information relating to the Commerce, Manufactures, Circulation, and

Finance of the country. At a later period Price, Arthur Young, and Chalmers, treated the subject of Population with great ability. Young has left a monument of his talent and industry in his various publications relating to Agriculture, and Playfair's Work on Commerce has a high reputation.

Many other similar publications in particular branches of the science might be mentioned ; but the first which comprehends all the details of Statistical Science was the account of Scotland already noticed, which appeared in the year 1791. A new edition is now in course of publication, which brings the information down to the most recent date. In the year 1793, the Government established a Board of Agriculture in England ; and, before its dissolution, which occurred in a few years after its establishment, it collected and published some useful statements relating to the state of Agriculture in each county.

Little, however, of a practical character, and on a comprehensive scale, was effected until the year 1832, when Lord Auckland and Mr. Poulett Thomson, who then presided over the Board of Trade, established a Statistical Office in that department, to collect, arrange, and publish statements relating to the condition, and bearing upon the various interests of the British Empire. The volumes annually printed, and laid before Parliament by this Office, are too well known to require further notice on the present occasion. In the summer of 1833, the Statistical Section was formed in the British Association for the advancement of Science, during the period of its meeting at Cambridge ; and before the close of that year, the Manchester Statistical Society was established. The Statistical Society of London, which had been projected at Cambridge, was established in the spring of 1834, and since that time the pursuit of this science has extended very rapidly. Societies for prosecuting statistical enquiries have sprung up throughout the kingdom. Numerous important publications, devoted wholly to statistical expositions, of the condition and resources of the country, have appeared, among which may be noticed, without detracting from the merit of others, the Statistical Accounts of part of Ireland, by the Officers of the Irish Ordnance Survey ; Macculloch's " Statistics of the British Empire," with the " Dictionary of Commerce," by the same author ; M'Gregor's " Statistics of Nations ;" and Porter's " Progress of the Nation." The valuable accounts of the state of Education in the towns of Manchester, Salford, Bury, Liverpool, and York, prepared and published by the Statistical Society of Manchester, deserve to be specially noticed among the most important recent publications in the educational branch of Statistical Science. The numerous Parliamentary enquiries into the condition of the population, agriculture, and commerce of this country, which have been commenced during the last ten years, afford an important acknowledgment on the part of the Legislature, that sta-

tistical results are necessary for the right comprehension of the principles which should guide the proceedings of Government. The results of these investigations form a collection of Statistical documents, which, for extent and value, have not been surpassed in any country.

With the view, therefore, of encouraging this growing taste, of uniting the efforts of existing Societies, and of promoting the establishment of others, as well as of affording to individuals a channel of communication upon Statistical subjects, this Journal is commenced. It will contain an account of the Proceedings of the Statistical Society of London, and of those Societies in the country with which it is in correspondence; notices of their Meetings; Copies or Abstracts of Papers read before them; communications on Statistical Subjects; Queries and Tabular Forms for prosecuting original Enquiries; Copies or Abstracts of Parliamentary Reports and Papers relating to Statistics; Reviews and Lists of new Statistical Works, with useful Tables, and such other matters as will promote in various ways the object of the publication.

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

THE Council of the Statistical Society of London, in presenting their Fourth Annual Report, have great satisfaction in stating that, a review of the proceedings of the past year affords them much reason to congratulate the Fellows of the Society on its progress, and on its continually improving prospects of usefulness, arising from an evident increase of activity, and consequent extension of operations.

A Committee has been appointed by the Council for the purpose of prosecuting statistical enquiries into the state of education in a portion of the parishes of London, and it has already completed an investigation of this description throughout a populous and extensive district, comprising the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and the four parishes of the Strand Union.

The First Report of this Committee has been printed and published, containing a full and minute account of this enquiry; but copies of this document having recently been distributed to the Fellows of the Society, it is here unnecessary to add any further remark upon its contents. It may, however, be proper to observe that, the Council, considering an extensive circulation of information of this nature to be highly conducive to the advancement of the objects and interests of the Society, ordered a large impression of this Report, and have consequently been enabled to present copies of it to many public bodies, and to individuals distinguished for enlightened benevolence, by whom such a statistical exhibition of educational facts is likely to be appreciated and beneficially used.

This Committee is at present in active operation, and has nearly completed an enquiry into the state of the schools in the parishes of St. John's and St. Margaret's, in Westminster.